



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 03-13-2001**

**ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2001**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:**     **William A. Carey, Jr., Chair**                     **Martin J. Thrope**  
                  **Joani LaMachia, Vice Chair**                   **Denis J. Sullivan**  
                  **Michael T. Healy, Secretary**               **Barbara C. Goodman**  
                  **David W. McKenna**

**Supt. Kay Donovan, Joanne Gurry, Marilyn Bisbicos**

**Call To Order:       7:50**

### **Public Participation**

None

Mr. Carey asked for a moment of silence for former selectman Bob Walsh who died this week, and stated that flowers had been sent to the family on behalf of the Committee.

### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Healy reviewed correspondence.

Supt. Donovan announced that the girls varsity hockey team received the Good Sportsmanship Award. The boys wrestling team received an honorary Good Sportsmanship Award, and that the boys varsity hockey team was playing at BU this evening.

Mrs. Donovan informed the Committee that the schools would discontinue dispensing the Hepatitis B vaccine for grade 6 students. Citing the coverage by insurance companies and the duplication of the shot by primary care physicians the nursing supervisor recommended the change.

The Kindergarten Transition meeting that was postponed due to the recent snowstorm has been rescheduled for April 3rd at 6:45PM at the Town Hall.

Supt. Donovan addressed the incident involving a student at AHS. A letter going home to parents stated, "the student is charged with brandishing a pellet gun in a threatening way. The student and the teacher have a good and positive relationship and the assumption is that the action was not done with malicious intent. It is being treated in a serious way and the incident is under investigation." The student was taken out of school by the police, brought to Cambridge Court, and was arraigned. He is currently at home. There will be a hearing at school once it is investigated.

### **School Councils**

Committee member Joani LaMachia welcomed the school council members and principals. She highlighted the process to date and stated that the purpose for the evening was to approve the method to:

- .. Help to coordinate system-wide school based needs
- .. Collaborate and reinforce each councils work
- .. Align the planning process
- .. Comply with DOE regulations to qualify and quantify goals.

Ms. LaMachia took the opportunity to thank the leadership of the Superintendent, principals, and teachers in Arlington.

Mrs. Donovan reviewed the past practice of the goal setting process. In September goals were set for the school committee. They were then shared with principals, who in turn shared them with their individual councils/schools. The school councils then compiled the needs of their own school, brought them to the committee and the School Committee would then try to implement them altogether to present a budget.

Supt. Donovan reviewed the proposed Systemic Planning Steps/Annual Planning Cycle:

1. March - Individual School Councils & representative groups meet to develop proposed goals.
2. September -First Town-wide School Council Meeting/Proposed goals are presented.
3. September - Superintendent appoints subcommittee to conduct feasibility study & prioritize goals
4. November - Second Town-wide School Meeting/Superintendent presents goals. Superintendent assigns writing of goal statements.
5. November - Individual School Councils & representative groups write goals & submit them to Superintendent.
6. December – School Committee gives final approval of goals.

Supt. Donovan emphasized that although the new guidelines will serve as a master plan system wide, there will still be room for each school to work on their individual needs.

Some of the goals met this year:

- “ Science in the elementary school/two science specialists are on staff
- “ The Middle School Parents’ Curriculum Guide
- “ Hiring of a Human Resource Officer
- “ Smaller class size
- “ Professional development
- “ On going communication between school and home
- “ Review of all school policies
- “ Alignment of curriculum to state-required frameworks

Mrs. Donovan suggested that the entrance age for kindergarten be discussed in the future. Citing Arlington as one of the only communities with a December 31st cut off date and the implementation of a full day, she believes that an earlier cut off date would serve the students better. The councils shared what initiatives were in progress currently in their school. They also discussed ways to share information with each other and the community at large.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Healy

Voted to accept the Systemic Planning Steps and Annual Planning Cycle as our School Committee/School Council method of planning our goals and objectives for budgetary and other purposes. Unanimous.

Mrs. Donovan asked the School Councils if they would endorse the process. They did so overwhelming.

## **Recess**

### **Overview of Redistricting**

Supt. Donovan outlined the proposed boundaries for each school. She reported that the proposal is compliant with the initial draft presented to the Committee. Families moving into the new Mirak property would be assigned to the Hardy School district. The Bishop School is where the major changes would take place. Since the Bishop School is now using its science, art and music rooms as regular classrooms Mrs. Donovan explained that redistricting might be implemented there once the Hardy School is complete. The Superintendent emphasized that the process would probably take place over a three-year period.

The next steps would be to meet with individual schools to receive feedback from each school district and bring back any concerns to the School Committee.

Mr. Healy asked if the Superintendent would revisit the open enrollment policy given the changing district lines and give consideration to families living in the border areas. Mrs. Donovan noted that traffic supervisors would be reestablished where needed.

Supt. Donovan will inform the Committee of the scheduled dates at each school.

### **Ottoson Curriculum Overview**

Ms. Goodman stated that as chair of the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee, one of its primary goals for the year was to develop a parent curriculum guide for the Ottoson Middle School grades 6, 7, 8. It includes not only the curriculum but also other programs, services, and gives parents an idea of how they can be involved and better informed. Dr. Gurry stated that the document declares to the community that Arlington has a sequential aligned curriculum but that we do more than align to the frameworks. It also contains the mission statement of the school and the School Committee’s Position Paper on the MCAS. The teachers worked with the department heads in developing the guide.

Dr. Gurry thanked Bob Sprague for making the document visually appealing and inviting. The document will be presented to parents on March 29th at the Ottoson Exploration Night.

### **Report of PTBC**

- “ Mr. Thrope reported that there are a number of issues at the Brackett School that continue to be resolved at no cost to the Town.
- “ The Bishop School is 100% finished and closed.

At the Hardy School the PTBC continues to push for a fall opening. Hidden construction costs and a hot construction market have driven up the cost of the project. The overriding consideration is to do the job right and to provide equity for all schools. As a result we are over the original estimate on the schools but it will be reimbursable at 63% by the State.

- “ **Peirce** – sub bids will be received on April 5th and on April 19th the final opening of the bids will take place.

Supt. Donovan reported that a letter had been sent to the School Building Assistance Bureau (SBAB) giving a debate or argument on each issue and why this results in an increase in costs. The letter asks them to allocate an additional \$30.00 per square foot for that particular building. An answer is not expected until after the bids from the Peirce School are received.

### **Explorations & Enrichments Summer 2001 (Summer School)**

Dr. Gurry informed the Committee that the summer program would begin June 28th. It will run four days a week for four weeks (with the exception of the first week which will be scheduled as June 28th & 29th and July 2nd & 3rd). She stated that there would be an increase in

tuition as well as a longer day 9:00-12:45 PM. Notices to teachers and parents would be sent out in the next week or two.

Supt. Donovan stated that the DOE has issued a directive for school districts not to ask for a waiver for the recent snow days. The DOE emphasized that schools must meet the 180 required days of school. Our calendar has five days built into it-if we go beyond the 185 days an argument could be brought forth.

#### **Budget Review**

Moved to the next agenda

#### **New Business**

Mr. Healy reported that the policy & procedures subcommittee met this evening and another meeting is scheduled for March 21st @ 3:45 PM.

#### **Warrant Article for School Committee Compensation (#84)**

Mr. Healy asked that warrant article #84 be discussed. Mrs. Donovan supplied the Committee with the figures from other communities that receive a stipend. Cambridge receives \$25,900.00, Watertown receives \$2,500.00, Lexington and Winchester do not receive anything.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. McKenna

Moved that the School Committee support Warrant Article #84 to recommend a stipend/salary in the amount of \$1000.00 for School Committee members.

Ms. Goodman continued by stating that as a member of the committee there are expenses that are incurred. It says something about our status and how much credibility we have. Mr. Thrope stated he agrees with Ms. Goodman however he did have reservations concerning the difference between a stipend and a salary, and the timing. Mr. Thrope emphasized that it is a tough budget year, and that all of the members on the committee were aware that school committee members were not compensated. He suggested that the article apply to future committee members as opposed to current members. Mr. Thrope offered that if the warrant article does become reality he might not accept it, as it is not consistent with his definition of what a public servant is. Ms. LaMachia stated that although there are compelling reasons to support the article she shares the concern over the timing of it since we are looking at a bare bones budget. She suggested looking at reimbursement for conferences and professional development. Mr. McKenna stated that he seconded the motion for discussion and that he would abstain from the vote. He pointed out that there is no 'right time' and that the issue should have been discussed before being placed as an article. Mr. McKenna stated that clarification between a salary and a stipend must be made. We also need to know what our classification is; currently it is 'regular town employee, non-compensated'. Mr. McKenna recommended 'no action' at this time and that the Committee explore the issue after the election. Mr. Sullivan agreed that there is no 'right time' and echoed Mr. McKenna's recommendation of no action. He also would like to hear what Town Meeting's view is on the issue. Mr. Healy stressed that the status should not change based on the salary and agreed that it is bad timing.

Ms Goodman amended her motion from an amount of \$1000.00 to \$100.00.

Mr. Thrope recommended bringing it back at a later time after being sufficiently investigated.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was

Voted to table the discussion until two weeks from tonight at the next school committee meeting and also answer the questions of stipend/salary. RC: Ms. Goodman-yes, Mr. Sullivan-yes, Mr. McKenna-yes, Ms. LaMachia-yes, Mr. Carey-yes, Mr. Thrope-no, Mr. Healy-no. Motion passes

Mr. Thrope requested that recess time at the elementary school be discussed at a future meeting. Supt. Donovan stated that she would place it on the next agenda.

Mr. Thrope asked that the Ottoson Activity Day and some of the choices offered for the day be discussed.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Healy it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations and a personnel issue. RC: Unanimous.

Motion to adjourn at 11:15 PM